# 5.0 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The *CEQA Guidelines* require analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the project's basic objectives and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice.[5]

The PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn Expansion has been described and analyzed in the previous chapters, and potentially significant impacts and recommended mitigation measures to avoid these impacts have been identified. The following discussion is intended to inform the public and decision makers of three potentially feasible alternatives to the proposed project. A discussion of the environmentally superior alternative is also provided.

This chapter discusses the following alternatives:

- *No Project alternative*, which assumes no development on the project site (status quo);
- *Lower Intensity alternative*, which assumes a fifty percent reduction in development intensity using the same footprint for development; and
- *Higher Intensity alternative*, which assumes the construction of a commercial use consistent with the Village Commercial zoning designation.
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For each alternative addressed, a brief description of its principal characteristics is followed by an analysis of potential impacts. The emphasis of the analysis is upon the alternative's comparison to the proposed project for potentially significant impacts, and whether or not the alternative would reduce, eliminate, or create new significant impacts.

## 5.1 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

### Principal Characteristics

The No Project alternative assumes that the project site would remain unchanged. The project site would remain a parking lot. The drainage pond, landscaping, and basketball courts would remain on-site and there would be no expansion of the PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn. Under the No Project Alternative, development proposed and approved outside of the project site would occur as planned.

[5] *CEQA Guidelines*, 1998, Section 15126.6.

**Analysis of the No Project Alternative**

The No Project alternative would result in the following impacts:

- *Land Use.* Under the No Project alternative, land uses would remain the same and there would be no change in land use or zoning at the project site. The project site would continue to be used as a parking lot. The drainage pond would remain in place, as would the basketball courts. Because the No Project alternative is located within an area with existing development, the alternative would not conflict with existing land uses. The No Project alternative would not conflict with any applicable land use or habitat conservation plan. No land use impacts were identified for the proposed project and the impacts under the No Project alternative would be similar.
- *Geology.* No geologic impacts were identified for the proposed project and impacts under the No Project alternative would remain the same. There would be no impacts related to exposure of people to seismic hazards, or to development from soils and geologic conditions at the project site as a result of the No Project alternative.
- *Water Resources.* Under the No Project alternative, existing drainage conditions would remain the same at the project site. Impervious surface area would remain the same, and there would be no increase in runoff amounts. There would be no impacts to Squaw Creek from grading at the project site or from improvements made in Squaw Creek. No below grade construction would occur; therefore, there would be no dewatering as a result of construction and no effect to groundwater supplies. Impacts to water resources would be less for the No Project alternative than the proposed project although were deemed less than significant.
- *Biological Resources.* There would be no loss of grass, shrubs, or wildlife habitat at the project site from implementation of the No Project alternative. In addition, there would be no placement of fill on the banks of Squaw Creek or the potential for sediment and silt to enter Squaw Creek during construction. The No Project alternative would not result in impacts to habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants nor reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. Impacts to biological resources would be less than the proposed project, which were deemed less than significant.
- *Noise.* Under the No Project alternative, there would be no increase in traffic-related noise, nor increases in exposure of people to stationary-source noise sources from snowmaking and snow-related maintenance activities. In addition, there would be no increase in noise levels due to construction of the project. Noise impacts would be less than the proposed project which were deemed as less than significant.
- *Air Quality.* Implementation of the No Project alternative would not result in any exceedences of ambient air quality standards nor contribute substantially to any existing or projected air quality violation. There would be no fugitive dust or construction emissions generated under the No Project alternative. This impact would be less than the proposed project which was deemed as less than significant.
- *Visual Resources.* Under the No Project alternative, the project site would remain a flat, asphalt parking lot and there would be no development of mountain lodge-style, six-story residential units. Implementation of the No Project alternative would not would substantially alter or obstruct views of the mountain features from existing residential areas adjacent to the project site. The No Project alternative would eliminate a significant visual impact that occurs with implementation of the project.

- *Cultural Resources.* No significant historical resources exist on the project site. Under the No Project alternative, no grading or excavation would occur and the project site would remain undisturbed. There would be no impact on potential subsurface archaeological or cultural resources, although this impact would be less than under the proposed project.
- *Hazardous Materials.* There would be no transport of hazardous materials under the No Project alternative and no risk to the public or environment involving the release of hazardous materials. This impact would be incrementally less than the proposed project, which has limited potential for hazardous materials transport and use.
- *Housing and Population.* Under the No Project alternative, there would be no construction of support facilities or residential units. The existing number of residents and employees on the project site would remain unchanged. Although residential units would be constructed as part of the proposed project, they would not be occupied on a permanent basis. Implementation of the No Project alternative would not cause in a loss of housing for the region. The increase in employees as a result of the proposed project would be small and would not significantly affect affordable housing. The No Project alternative would not conflict with Squaw Valley's affordable housing policies or objectives or jobs/housing balance.
- *Utilities.* The No Project alternative would not create a demand for water, wastewater treatment, electricity, natural gas, or communication services or utility infrastructure and would not require the expansion or extension of utility infrastructure. Implementation of the No Project alternative would not create an exceedence of any wastewater treatment requirements. Impacts under the No Project alternative would be less than the proposed project and which were deemed less than significant. Unlike the proposed project, the potential to enhance the local water system by converting the existing PlumpJack irrigation well to a potable well would not occur with the No Project alternative.
- *Transportation and Circulation.* Under the No Project alternative, 2010 traffic volumes are forecasted to increase due to existing approved and planned development in and around Squaw Valley. Under cumulative 2010 No Project conditions, intersection LOS at SR-89/Squaw Valley road will decrease to E, or LOS F with a metered right-turn lane. Impacts under the No Project alternative would be only incrementally less than the proposed project, although the levels of service would remain unchanged.
- *Public Services.* The No Project alternative would not include any new residential or commercial development and would not result in an increased demand for public services. Impacts to public services would be less than under the proposed project and which were deemed less than significant.

## 5.2 LOWER INTENSITY ALTERNATIVE

### Principal Characteristics

The Lower Intensity alternative assumes that the proposed project would be constructed at approximately fifty percent of the proposed project intensity. To achieve this level, the development footprint would be similar to the proposed project, and the height would be reduced to three floors. Parking would be located underground and the lobby, administration offices, public areas, and residential units would be located similar to the proposed project, but on three floors.

**Analysis of the Lower Intensity Alternative**

The Lower Intensity alternative would result in the following impacts:

- *Land Use.* Under the Lower Intensity alternative, land uses would change from a parking lot and basketball court to the same uses proposed with the project. Land use designations and zoning at the project site would remain the same. The Lower Intensity alternative would integrate multi-family residential development with existing development and the alternative would not conflict with existing land uses. The Lower Intensity alternative would not conflict with any applicable land use or habitat conservation plan. No land use impacts were identified for the proposed project and impacts under the Lower Intensity alternative would remain the same.
- *Geology.* No geologic impacts were identified for the proposed project and impacts under the Lower Intensity alternative would remain the same. There would be no impacts related to exposure of people to seismic hazards, or to development from soils and geologic conditions at the project site as a result of the Lower Intensity alternative.
- *Water Resources.* Under the Lower Intensity alternative, development would occur and existing drainage conditions at the project site would change. Even with development of the Lower Intensity alternative, impervious surface area would remain the same as it currently is and there would be no difference in runoff amounts from the proposed project. Impacts to the banks of Squaw Creek from grading at the project site would be similar to the proposed project and the potential for dewatering as a result of construction would have the same potential effect to groundwater supplies. Impacts to water resources would be similar for the Lower Intensity alternative as the proposed project which were deemed less than significant.
- *Biological Resources.* Implementation of the Lower Intensity alternative would result in the loss of 0.44 acres of grass and low-growing shrubs at the project site. This impact would be the same as under the proposed project. There would be no increase in impact to wildlife habitat at the project site from the proposed project and which was deemed as less than significant. The Lower Intensity alternative would result in the placement of fill on the banks of Squaw Creek or the potential for sediment and silt to enter Squaw Creek during construction. This impact would be similar to the proposed project. The Lower Intensity alternative would not result in greater impacts to habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants nor reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal more than the proposed project.
- *Noise.* Under the Lower Intensity alternative, there would be a smaller increase in traffic-related noise and in the number of people exposed to stationary-source noise sources from snowmaking and snow-related maintenance activities when compared with the proposed project. There would be a slight decrease in the construction duration due to construction of a smaller project, although noise levels would be similar during construction. Noise impacts would be incrementally less than the proposed project and which were deemed as less than significant.
- *Air Quality.* No significant impacts to air quality were identified for the proposed project. Implementation of the Lower Intensity alternative would not result in any exceedences of ambient air quality standards or contribute substantially to any existing or projected air quality violation. Construction and creation of fugitive dust or construction emissions would be incrementally less than under the proposed project and which were deemed as less than significant.
- *Visual Resources.* Under the Lower Intensity alternative, the project site would be developed with mountain lodge-style residential units to a height of three floors. Development of the project site would not substantially change the character of the existing views. The project would be integrated into existing development in a style consistent with architecture in Squaw Valley and

throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin. Implementation of the Lower Intensity alternative would only incrementally alter views of the mountains from areas adjacent to the project site although this impact would be less than under the proposed project. Like the proposed six–story structure, views from existing residential development would be substantially altered or obstructed with this alternative, although to a lesser extent due to the lower structure height. As a result, this alternative would have a similar impact (significant) on views from existing residential development when compared with the proposed project.

- *Cultural Resources.* No significant historical resources exist on the project site. Under the Lower Intensity alternative, grading or excavation would occur which would have the potential to impact potential subsurface archaeological or cultural resources. This impact would be similar to the proposed project.
- *Hazardous Materials.* Hazardous materials would be transported and used during construction under the Lower Intensity alternative and a less than significant risk would exist for the public or environment involving the release of hazardous materials. Implementation of the Lower Intensity alternative would have an effect similar to the proposed project.
- *Housing and Population.* The Lower Intensity alternative proposes the construction of fifty percent fewer residential units resulting in a decrease in the number of residents and employees on the project site. The increase in employees required by the proposed project would be small and the Lower Intensity alternative would be smaller and would only incrementally change the jobs/housing balance in the region. The Lower Intensity alternative would not conflict with Squaw Valley's affordable housing policies and, like the proposed project, would pay a fee to offset the affordable housing requirements.
- *Utilities.* The Lower Intensity alternative would create a demand for water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and communication services and utility infrastructure. This increase in demand would be small and would be less than significant. The project site and surrounding area have been previously developed. New infrastructure would be built on-site, but the project would not require the expansion or extension of utility infrastructure into an undeveloped area. Water supply would likely require the conversion of the PlumpJack irrigation well to a potable well, and would consume fifty percent less ground water when compared with the proposed project consumption. Implementation of the Lower Intensity alternative would not exceed any wastewater treatment requirements. Impacts under the Lower Intensity alternative would be less than the proposed project which were deemed less than significant.
- *Transportation and Circulation.* Intersection LOS under 2010 No Project and 2010 With Project conditions is forecasted to decrease to E or LOS F with a metered right-turn lane. This is due to existing approved and planned development in and around Squaw Valley and, like the proposed project, and the Lower Intensity alternative would only incrementally deteriorate traffic conditions. Impacts under the Lower Intensity alternative would be similar to the proposed project.
- *Public Services.* The Lower Intensity alternative would result in the addition of residential uses at the project site and would result in an increased demand for public services. Impacts to public services would be less than under the proposed project which were deemed less than significant.

## 5.3 HIGHER INTENSITY ALTERNATIVE

The Higher Intensity alternative assumes that the proposed project would be a commercial use, consistent with the Village Commercial zoning designation. It is anticipated that the use would

complement the resort orientation associated with Squaw Valley, and could include several retail uses, including restaurant, sporting goods, apparel sales, etc. The use would be year round and would generate vehicular activity consistent with peak hour traffic characteristics. The buildings would have the same footprint as the project with a height of approximately two floors. Parking would be located underground. Architectural features would be consistent with the surrounding resort character.

**Analysis of the Higher Intensity Alternative**

The Higher Intensity alternative would result in the following impacts:

- *Land Use.* Under the Higher Intensity alternative, land uses would change from a parking lot and basketball court to retail commercial. Land use designations and zoning at the project site would remain the same (Village Commercial). The Higher Intensity alternative would integrate the project site with existing commercial and residential development and the alternative would not conflict with existing land uses. The Higher Intensity alternative would not conflict with any applicable land use or habitat conservation plan. No land use impacts were identified for the proposed project and impacts under the Higher Intensity alternative would remain the same.
- *Geology.* No geologic impacts were identified for the proposed project and impacts under the Higher Intensity alternative would remain the same. There would be no impacts related to exposure of people to seismic hazards, or to development from soils and geologic conditions at the project site as a result of the Higher Intensity alternative.
- *Water Resources.* Under the Higher Intensity alternative, development would occur and existing drainage conditions at the project site would change. Even with development of the Higher Intensity alternative, impervious surface area would remain the same as it currently is and there would be no increase in runoff amounts from the proposed project. Impacts to Squaw Creek from grading at the project site would be similar to the proposed project and the potential for dewatering as a result of construction would have the same potential effect to groundwater supplies. Impacts to water resources would be similar for the Higher Intensity alternative as the proposed project which were deemed less than significant.
- *Biological Resources.* Implementation of the Higher Intensity alternative would result in the loss of 0.44 acres of grass and low-growing shrubs at the project site. This impact would be the same as under the proposed project. There would be no increase in impact to wildlife habitat at the project site from the proposed project and which was deemed as less than significant. The Higher Intensity alternative would result in the placement of fill in Squaw Creek or the potential for sediment and silt to enter Squaw Creek during construction. This impact would be similar to the proposed project. The Higher Intensity alternative would not result in greater impacts to habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants nor reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal more than the proposed project.
- *Noise.* Under the Higher Intensity alternative, there would be a greater increase in traffic-related noise, but fewer people exposed to stationary-source noise sources from snowmaking and snow-related maintenance activities (i.e., from elimination of residential uses). There would be a slight decrease in construction duration due to construction of a smaller (lower) project. Noise impacts would be similar to the proposed project and which were deemed as less than significant.
- *Air Quality.* No significant impacts to air quality were identified for the proposed project. Despite slightly higher peak hour traffic volumes, implementation of the Higher Intensity alternative would not result in any exceedences of ambient air quality standards or contribute

substantially to any existing or projected air quality violation. Construction and creation of fugitive dust or construction emissions would be the same as under the proposed project which were deemed as less than significant.

- *Visual Resources.* Under the Higher Intensity alternative, the project site would be developed with mountain-style retail/commercial buildings, approximately two stories high. This development would be lower than the proposed project but would have the same footprint as the proposed project. Development of the project site would result in a beneficial impact, the integration of the site into existing development in a style consistent with architecture in Squaw Valley and throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin. Implementation of the Higher Intensity alternative would only incrementally alter views of the mountains from areas adjacent to the project site (although less that the proposed project due to lower buildings) and this impact would similar to the proposed project. Views from existing residential development would be substantially altered although not obstructed with this alternative. The view alteration from existing residential development would block adjacent views, although would not be as extensive as the proposed six-story structure (or three-story structure from the Lower Intensity alternative) due to the lower structure height. However, this alternative would still have a similar significant impact on views (i.e., substantially altered) from existing residential development when compared with the proposed project.
- *Cultural Resources.* No significant historical resources exist on the project site. Under the Higher Intensity alternative, grading or excavation would occur which would have the potential to impact potential subsurface archaeological or cultural resources. This impact would be similar to the proposed project which were deemed as less than significant.
- *Hazardous Materials.* Hazardous materials would be transported and used during construction under the Higher Intensity alternative and there would be a less than significant risk to the public or environment involving the release of hazardous materials. Implementation of the Higher Intensity alternative would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response plan. This impact would be similar as under the proposed project.
- *Housing and Population.* The Higher Intensity alternative proposes the construction of commercial facilities resulting in a significant increase in the number of employees on the project site. Although residential units would be constructed as part of the proposed project, they would not be occupied on a permanent basis. Implementation of the Higher Intensity alternative would require an increase in permanent housing for the region to serve project employees. The increase in employees required by the proposed project would be small and the Higher Intensity alternative would alter the jobs/housing balance in the region. The Higher Intensity alternative would not conflict with Squaw Valley's affordable housing policies or objectives to the extent that the appropriate fees offset affordable housing impacts.
- *Utilities.* The Higher Intensity alternative would create a demand for water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and communication services and utility infrastructure. This increase in demand would be small and would be less than significant. The project site and surrounding area have been previously developed. New infrastructure would be built on-site, but the project would not require the expansion or extension of utility infrastructure into an undeveloped area. Implementation of the Higher Intensity alternative would not exceed any wastewater treatment requirements. Impacts under the Higher Intensity alternative may be incrementally more than the proposed project which were deemed less than significant.
- *Transportation and Circulation.* Intersection LOS under 2010 No Project and 2010 project conditions is forecasted to decrease to E, or to LOS F with a metered right-turn lane. This forecasted increase is due to existing approved and planned development in and around Squaw

Valley. The Higher Intensity alternative would aggravate these conditions. Impacts under the Higher Intensity alternative would be greater than traffic impacts associated with the proposed project.

- *Public Services.* The Higher Intensity alternative would result in the addition of commercial development at the project site and would result in an increased demand for public services. Impacts to public services may be incrementally more than under the proposed project which were deemed less than significant.